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Ungrateful slaves? An examination of job quality and job satisfaction for male part-time workers in the UK.

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Abstract

Research on part-time work has concentrated over many decades on the experiences of women but male part-time employment is growing in the UK. This article addresses two sizeable gaps in knowledge concerning male part-timers: are men's part-time jobs of lower quality than men's full-time jobs? Are male part-timers more or less job-satisfied compared to their full-time peers? A fundamental part of both interrogations is whether men's part-time employment varies by occupational class. The article is motivated by the large body of work on female part-timers. Its theoretical framework is rooted in one of the most controversial discussions in the sociology of women workers: the 'grateful slave' debate that emerged in the 1990s when researchers sought to explain why so many women expressed job satisfaction with low quality part-time jobs. Innovatively, this article draws upon those contentious ideas to provide new insights into male, rather than female, part-time employment. Based upon analysis of a large quantitative data set, the results provide clear evidence of low quality male part-time employment in the UK, when compared with men's full-time jobs. Men working part-time also express deteriorating satisfaction with jobs overall and in several specific dimensions of their jobs. Male part-timers in lower occupational class positions retain a clear 'lead' both in bad job quality and low satisfaction. The article asks whether decreasingly satisfied male part-time workers should be termed

‘ungrateful slaves’? It unpacks the ‘grateful slave’ metaphor and, after doing so, rejects its value for the ongoing analysis of part-time jobs in the formal labour market.

Keywords: men’s work, part-time employment, job quality, job satisfaction, class.

Introduction

Women have long dominated the extensive part-time labour market in the UK. Given the substantially higher number of female than male part-timers, debates around part-time employment are justifiably dominated by women's experiences (AUTHORS 2015, 2018; Nicolaisen et al. 2019; Ellingsaeter and Jensen 2019; O'Reilly and Fagan 1998; Tomlinson and Durbin 2014). Nevertheless, the proportion of men working part-time has grown, boosted by post-recessionary labour market developments. The ONS (2019a) reports over 2.2 million men in part-time employment in 2018, up from 1.7 million in 2007. The corresponding figures for women were 6.3 and 5.7 million.

At the time of writing (2019), we are at the end of a post-recessionary decade marked by austerity politics, rising levels of financial uncertainty and growing precariousness in work. Yet, of the three recent UK recessions (1980s, 1990s and 2000s), the so-called 'great recession' in 2008-9 saw the smallest fall in employment (1.9%; 2.4% in the 1980s; 3.4% in the 1990s. Jenkins 2010: 30). This feature of 2008-9 is due, in large part, to changes to work-time (Lallement 2011): overall hours fell and part-time working rose, including for men. Multiple studies of the labour market show increases in the number of male part-timers during and after the great recession and, further, that these increases were associated with a heavier concentration of men in lower level occupations and in lower waged jobs, alongside an up-swing in levels of involuntary male part-time working as more men struggled to find suitable full-time opportunities in a tightening labour market (Belfield et al. 2017; Bell and Blanchflower 2018; Nightingale 2019). At the same time there has been an increase in many forms of 'precarious' work. Temporary workers represent 5% of all employees in the UK (ONS 2019b) and official figures place workers on zero-hours contracts

at 2.7% (ONS 2019c). The global rise of the platform (or gig) economy has compounded concerns about the proliferation of precarious working patterns (Huws et al. 2018; Warhurst et al 2017).

These are valuable and worrying insights into the changing nature of work and the longer-term prospects for many of securing 'good' full-time jobs. Yet headline figures leave many questions unanswered about the quality of jobs and, most notably for the purposes of this article, the objective and subjective quality of men's part-time jobs.

This article aims to help fill sizeable gaps in the current state of knowledge by addressing two key research questions: first, are men's part-time jobs of lower quality than men's full-time jobs, especially when we go beyond measuring 'quality' only in terms of what jobs pay? Second, are men satisfied with their part-time jobs? An underlying theme in both questions concerns the extent to which occupational class is an important factor in understanding male part-time employment, in the same way that it has been shown to affect women's part-time employment. Occupational class is a strong signifier of differences among female part-timers in how and why they work part-time, and the conditions of their jobs (AUTHORS 2018). Furthermore, many of the economic changes impacting men's working lives (e.g. the loss of secure full-time jobs in traditionally male-dominated industries) are known to be structured along class lines (Walker and Roberts 2018).

Innovatively, our study of male part-time jobs is motivated by the larger and better established body of literature that is dedicated to *female* part-time employment.

Specifically, the approach of the article references the twin themes of job quality and job

satisfaction that, together, underpin the highly contentious positioning of female part-time workers as potential 'grateful slaves'. The 'grateful slave' tag first appeared in the sociology of women's employment in the 1990s amid a juxtaposition of the objective *quality* of women's part-time jobs with part-timers' *satisfaction with* those jobs. Female part-timers in the UK were, and are still (AUTHORS 2018), known to be over-concentrated in objectively poor jobs, marked by low hourly wages and limited opportunities for advancement. Nevertheless, the women employed in these jobs often interpret them positively, resulting in contentious disparities in how researchers analyse this apparent paradox. Hakim's 1991 'grateful slave' article explained this puzzle by reference to the types of women who work part-time. Part-timers are weakly committed to paid employment and careers, she argued, with a work-lifestyle preference for home-making and caring roles, and so they choose, and are satisfied with (grateful for), poor quality jobs. Hakim (1995, 1996, 2000, 2007) went on to develop these early ideas into a 'Preference theory', elaborating upon her argument that diverse preferences are powerful causes of heterogeneity in work-lifestyles. A debate followed, sustained across decades and still regularly cited at the time of writing (e.g. Frodermann and Muller 2019; Gallie 2019; Nightingale 2019; Polkowska and Filipek 2019), with considerable discussion over the significance to be attached to women's agency in shaping their working lives (Halrynjo and Lyng 2009; Lewis and Simpson 2016; Yerkes 2013).

Class entered early into the grateful slave debate because Hakim's potential grateful slaves, women concentrated in weak quality jobs yet satisfied with them, were working low down the occupational hierarchy, had working class upbringings and commonly lived with working class partners (AUTHOR A). Critics of the grateful slave thesis pointed to class constraints shaping both women's entry to part-time employment and their evaluations of jobs, in

contrast to Hakim's heavier emphasis on women's unconstrained choices (e.g. McRae 2003).

The original grateful slave article was published in September 1991. This was at the end of a recession which, as we have seen, saw the greatest drop in employment of all three recent recessions. However, the article did not reflect on its backdrop of rising job loss and squeezes on living standards (Jenkins 2010). In contrast, our article was directly stimulated by the increase in part-time work among men in a time of economic unrest. It applies the twin themes of job quality and job satisfaction, core to the grateful slave paradox, to men's working lives. Are men entering into and willingly embracing more precarious working arrangements, and expressing satisfaction with lower quality jobs, at a time when the job market is tight and better quality jobs are scarce?

To our knowledge, despite almost three decades of grateful slave-inspired deliberations, frequently located in this journal, this article is the first to examine men's part-time job quality over time and to juxtapose job quality with male part-time job satisfaction, while also asking whether men in part-time jobs demonstrate the same class trends as women in job quality and job satisfaction. The article is also the first to unpack the meaning of the metaphor of a grateful slave and reflect upon its appropriateness for examining lower-quality part-time employment and job satisfaction.

Trends in male part-time employment in the UK

Men in the UK tend to work full-time or not at all, yet there is a clear upward trend in levels of male part-time employment. Data from the large, nationally representative *Labour Force Survey* (LFS) show plainly the increases over time (Figure 1a). A question that attracted the interest of academics, policy makers and worker organizations, amid this growth, concerned the extent to which men's part-time employment is in/voluntary (Kamerade and Richardson 2017). LFS data also show a rapid rise in the percentage of men working part-time because they could not find a full-time job after 2008 (Figure 1b). Involuntary part-time levels peaked post-recession in 2012/2013, at around a third of male part-timers, then dropped to 20 per cent into 2017 and 2018.

It is striking that the steepest post-recessionary increases in involuntary part-time working were among those male part-timers employed in Skilled Trades (a 26% rise by 2012) and Sales/Customer Services occupations (23%), followed by Elementary workers (20%) and Process, Plant and Machine Operatives (17%) (Figure 1c). The two senior occupational groups, Managers and Professionals, were shielded from such change, with the smallest growths at 5%.

INSERT FIGURE 1 AROUND HERE

Given the evidence of a growth in involuntary part-time work among men over time, specifically concentrated at lower occupational levels, the following section discusses the measurement of job quality and occupational class.

The quality of men's part-time jobs, and occupational class

There are myriad ways to understand job quality and considerable debate over how to best measure this complex concept (Goos and Manning 2003; Taylor 2017; Wright et al. 2018). As McGovern et al. stated (2004): the 'go to' indicator is what a job pays. Part-time jobs rarely provide a good hourly wage, with ramifications for workers' financial security in the short and longer terms, and hourly wages can be particularly poor for workers employed in lower level occupations (Bardasi and Gornick 2008; Harkness et al. 2019). Much of the evidence for the picture of poorly-paying part-time jobs is based on women workers, but post-recession studies warned of lowering wages for male part-timers (Belfield et al. 2017; Bell and Blanchflower 2018; Nightingale 2019).

Wages are a crucial component of jobs, but it is problematic to use a single measure to categorise a job as bad or good in quality, and so a range of additional indicators have been developed. This article draws directly on Tilly's (1996) influential attempt to differentiate quality specifically within the part-time job market in order to challenge the dominant assumption, at that time, that all part-time jobs were equally bad. To distinguish good 'retention' part-time jobs, designed to retain valued employees, from bad 'secondary' jobs (workers whose turnover and retention are not priorities for a firm), Tilly (1996: 50) looked at 'four sets of key characteristics': wages; skill, training and responsibility; turnover; and promotion:

1. *Wages.* 'Part-time workers disproportionately crowd the very bottom of the wage distribution' (Tilly 1996: 53). Wages earned per hour are the necessary focus if we want to examine how part-timers compare with full-timers.
2. *Skill, training and responsibility.* Tilly maintained that secondary part-time jobs involve

lower levels of skill, training and responsibility than retention jobs. On skill and training, the US employers that Tilly interviewed considered secondary part-time jobs as requiring few skills from workers and needing little on-the-job training. Workers were deemed readily replaceable, and employers invested less in their development. Not only does training improve the quality of a current job, it can also support a worker to move into better jobs. Low quality part-time jobs are known to carry negative career implications, with men even more scarred by having part-time employment histories than women (O'Dorchaí et al. 2007; Pedulla 2016). On responsibility, Tilly argued that having responsibility for and control over aspects of one's work are 'good' job qualities, and this is in part because autonomy can offset negative effects of weaker dimensions of a job.

3. *Turnover*. Retention part-time jobs are devised to combat high turnover among valued workers, argued Tilly. This dimension of job quality allows an analysis of whether part-time jobs offer secure labour market positions or not. Job tenure and the threat of job loss are particularly relevant for our analysis of part-time jobs in the context of the fallout of a deep recession, austerity politics and increases in precarious work.
4. *Promotion*. 'Part-timers face special barriers to promotion' (Tilly 1996: 60). Tilly argued that internal workplace promotion ladders systematically disadvantage part-timers. Many are trapped in entry-level jobs and even part-timers in higher level occupations face disadvantage because career advancement customarily requires moving to full-time hours.

The above characteristics remain influential in the literature dedicated to part-time job quality (Fagan et al. 2013; AUTHOR B). We add a fifth: work-time.

5. *Work-time*. Although work-time was not one of Tilly's specified characteristics in

1996, he did discuss its importance. Work-time has since become a fundamental feature in job quality debates, not only for part-timers, stimulated by the inclusion of work-life balance in more recent job quality narratives (Kalleberg 2016; Wright et al. 2018) and, increasingly, by the work-time consequences of post-recessionary growths in precarity and job insecurity (AUTHOR A). Quality working time includes flexibility to adjust work-times, fitting with concerns around work-life balance (Fagan 1996). Similarly, the degree of over-time work is used to signal disparities in work-time quality because of the potential for negative spillover from the job to personal lives in terms of diminished time for self, friends and family (Felstead and Green 2017). The tempo and pace of work are important too, for worker health as well as work-life balance, because 'rush' and 'time-crunch' can leave workers exhausted by their jobs (Zuzanek 2004). The possibility that growing precariousness in the post-recessionary UK highlighted above would undermine the proclaimed 'flexi' benefits of part-time jobs adds further support for an extra measure of work-time quality (Felstead et al. 2018).

As part of the focus in the article on the quality of part-time jobs, we explore the extent to which job quality varies by class. There are many ways to operationalise class and here we draw directly upon Crompton (2010) who made a powerful case for the validity of 'occupational' class in the analysis of inequalities in working lives, arguing that the 'kinds of employment' entered into are decisive in shaping life-chances for workers and their families. Occupational class is also utilised here because it is key within the study of female part-time employment, underlying such major established themes as what occupations are available to women who want to work part-time and the classed ramifications for the labour market as a whole when part-time jobs become over-concentrated in lower occupational

positions (AUTHOR A; Fagan 2014). These classed themes are pertinent to men's working lives too but are under-researched in the study of male part-time employment. Finally, there is also a long and strong association between occupational class and job quality, including the amount of 'bad' jobs in a labour market, held by men as well as women (McGovern et al. 2004).

Part-time workers, job satisfaction and occupational class

The second research question addresses part-timers' satisfaction with their jobs. Job satisfaction is analysed more commonly in sociological than in many other disciplinary studies of working lives. Kalleberg (2016: 122) notes that, for sociology, the notion of 'good jobs' is a normative construct that is contested, fluid, contingent and evolving and 'the importance that people place on various aspects of the job differs according to their opportunities for attaining various kinds of job rewards'. These ideas speak directly to our theme of occupational class because, as Kalleberg argues, there are deeply classed variations in workers' opportunities and expectations that shape job satisfaction.

As outlined earlier, women's satisfaction with part-time jobs has stimulated discussion over many decades, most notably the 'grateful slave' thesis and its many critics. A necessarily simplified summary of the job satisfaction element of the grateful slave debate is whether to take at face value part-timers' expressed job satisfaction or else probe into the processes behind someone stating, 'I am job satisfied'. Convincing explanations emerged, alternative to 'grateful slavery', that concluded female part-timers were better viewed as 'satisficing with' or 'making the best of' bad part-time jobs, especially working-class women who suffer

restricted labour market opportunities (Walters 2005). Satisficing - a merger of 'satisfy' and 'suffice' - is rooted in economist Simon's (1957) decision-making theory where he argued it involves looking for a course of action that is 'good enough'. The phenomenon of 'satisficing' among women workers, pursuing a 'good enough' course of action, has been explained most persuasively by the greater responsibility placed upon women for caring and domestic tasks, limiting women's choices (Ginn et al. 1996; Nightingale 2019) and restricting their 'agency freedom' as far as their employment decisions are concerned (Lewis and Giullari 2005; Lewis and Simpson 2016), with class inequalities shaping which women are able to 'go beyond' satisficing (Crompton and Harris 1998).

In the face of a deluge of attention to women's work lives, kindled by that provocative sociological analysis of job quality and job satisfaction for female part-timers, it is extraordinary how little attention is paid to male part-timers. The small literature that does exist specifically into male part-time employment established that men are more likely to take a part-time job in order to smooth transitions into the labour force for the first time or out of it at the end of their working lives (Delsen 1998; Fagan 2014; Feldman 1990). Less positively, a part-time job might be taken in the absence of suitable full-time employment and this can affect levels of job satisfaction (Kifle 2018). We do know from the LFS that more men in the UK report working part-time involuntarily than women, increasing with the recession, and especially for working class men. The reasons for working part-time have ramifications for how part-timers evaluate their own jobs.

Data sources and considerations

The article draws upon the authors' analysis of a high quality, large, quantitative data set: the

Skills and Employment Survey series (SES) designed by job quality experts Felstead et al. (2014) who combined a sub-set of identical items on jobs from their separate nationally-representative surveys of individuals in employment. The resulting SES offers one of the most extensive collections of variables on job quality over time in Britain. It contains substantial numbers of male workers, permitting essential investigation of: part-timers versus full-timers and occupational class diversity. Our main exploration focuses upon the two years that span the 2008-9 recession: 2006 and 2012 (2012 was also the most recent data available at the time of analysis). We return to trends after 2012 to conclude. The definition of part-time working is set at less than 30 hours a week, as is customary in analysis of British data¹.

To explore if and how occupational class operates among male part-timers, men were categorised into three broad groupings using standard occupational classification. Due to sample size limitations, workers are sub-categorized into the following groups: Managers, Professionals and Associate Professional/Technical (MPA); Administrative, Trades and Personal (ATP); and Sales, Operatives and Elementary (SOE).

The five dimensions of part-time job quality, defined earlier, are measured via 12 available variables in the SES (detailed in Table 1). Building further upon Tilly's discussion of 'good' and 'bad' part-time jobs, a 'bad' quality category is specified for each variable, with 'bad' indicating its less advantageous dimensions². Bad is:

1. the lowest third of male hourly gross wages (Wages).
2. if workers report an 'educational mismatch' between the level held compared with that

required to get the job (Skill); very low learning time to do the job well; no training for the type of work being done (Training).

Responsibility: an SES scale (devised by Green) that measures responsibility over: how hard respondents work; what tasks they do; how they do the task; quality standards. All components are scored 0-3 (3 = highest level of discretion), with the discretion scale ranging from 0-12. A job is deemed 'bad' on this measure if the score is less than 2.

3. contracts that are not permanent; if workers feel at risk of job loss in the next 12 months (Turnover).
4. no chances of promotion (Promotion).
5. very little flexibility over start and finish times; very high-speed work almost all/all of the time; tight deadlines almost all/all of the time; often requiring overtime work (Work-time).

INSERT TABLE 1 AROUND HERE

Because some jobs fare well on certain elements of quality but do poorly on others, a summative variable was created. It signals if negative measures accumulate or are offset by positive aspects of the job. The 'Bad' and 'Not bad' categories of each variable had values set at 1 and 0, respectively, hence the summative variable has a maximum score of 12³.

The SES variables that focus on satisfaction with various aspects of the job are explored (measured on a scale of 1-7). Men who reported any strength of satisfaction (completely/very/fairly) were grouped together as 'satisfied'. This is a purposively inclusive understanding of 'satisfied', driven in part by sample size considerations, that nevertheless

enables us to explore variation among the men, by work-time and occupational class, and over time.

The SES is a high quality dataset but it is not without its limitations for this project. Even though it is based on sample sizes in the thousands, we need to be aware of small numbers when it comes to the rarer sub-groups such as male part-timers in higher occupational classes.

Moreover, unfortunately the SES did not ask men why they work part-time, hence our use of the LFS to frame the article.

Findings

The quality of men's part-time jobs in 2006 and 2012

We begin by identifying the percentage of men with a 'bad' dimension to their job and then explore trends over time. Wages are a crucial component of job quality and 2006 saw a clear, statistically significant part-time/full-time wage gap: fully two-thirds of part-timers had bad hourly wages (in the lowest third of the wage distribution), compared with only 30% of full-timers (Figure 2). Looking at the non-wage job characteristics too, part-timers fared less well than full-timers on many dimensions, though with the part-time/full-time gap varying in size. The gap was more extreme on dimensions such as contract (24% of part-timers reported a non-permanent contract, compared with 5% of full-time workers), and narrow on others such as training time (44% of part-timers and 42% of full-timers reported no training for the type of work being done). Conversely, the three temporal measures used to signal quality work-time showed *full-time* disadvantage: in addition to working longer usual hours, male full-timers were more likely than part-timers to work extended hours, at

speed and to tight deadlines. These temporal challenges to job quality are more traditionally associated with higher-level jobs (AUTHORS), and we look at occupation below, but it is clear that part-timers overall did fare better than full-timers when work-time job quality is measured this way.

INSERT FIGURE 2 HERE

Fundamental to concerns about more men working part-time is whether the expansion of men's part-time employment signals a change in job quality in the UK, with not just more but also, potentially, lower quality part-time jobs in the context of increasing precariousness. Figure 2b shows the situation in 2012 and it is not an encouraging picture. For example, the already wide part-time/full-time wage gap had deepened by 2012 as even more part-timers experienced relatively poor wages (74%), alongside stability for full-timers (29%). Figure 2c provides a visual summary of any change after 2006 in the proportions of men whose jobs fell into the bad category for each variable. Positive scores indicate a *deterioration* in quality after 2006 (because more men fell into the bad category). The picture for part-timers was far more unstable than for full-timers. They fared less well over time on many items but especially training times, educational mismatch, working to high speed and wages.

This paints a grim story of a growing low-waged, male part-time labour force, increasingly underemployed in terms of their qualifications and with more men receiving inadequate training to improve their jobs and prospects. Male part-timers did see some improvements in their self-assessed chances for promotion and having a permanent job contract (a positive

change of over 10%), removing the part-time/full-time gap on promotion into 2012 (Figure 2b), but with a persistent (albeit narrower) gap on contract type (12% versus 4%).

Do these aggregate patterns in job quality vary by occupational class? It is valuable to first examine the occupational class positions of the workers. Analysis of the SES affirms that male part-timers were over-concentrated in lower-level occupations and shows that the recession years saw a heavier concentration still (Table 2). Before the recession, far more part- than full-time employees were working in lower-level SOE jobs but the part-time/full-time occupational gap widened even further by 2012 as the percentage of SOE occupations among part-timers rose (from 45% to 58%).

INSERT TABLE 2 AROUND HERE

Returning to job quality and examining it by class, men at lower occupational levels fared most poorly. Concentrating only on occupational diversity among the part-timers, Figures 3a and 3b show that SOE part-timers were the most disadvantaged male part-time workers on most of the twelve components of job quality. Almost all were badly paid, in both years (95-96%). The SOE part-timers saw weakening in five job areas: training time, working at high speed, having to work overtime, educational mismatch and working to tight deadlines (substantially so in the first two) (3c). SOE part-timers, starting from a very low base, preserved their overall 'lead' in bad job quality into 2012. Key dimensions of job quality that are known to be weak in lower quality jobs (the amount of training provided for the job and a mismatch between education levels held and those needed to do the work) underwent deepening disadvantage. Yet so too did those work-time dimensions commonly associated

with higher-quality jobs, i.e. having to work overtime, working at very high speed and working to tight deadlines. While male part-timers experienced low and weakening job quality, provocative differences emerge when part-time/full-time disadvantage is analysed by occupational class.

INSERT FIGURE 3 AROUND HERE

These findings were reinforced when the 12 SES variables were combined into a summative variable (maximum score of 12). The mean score for the ‘bad job quality’ measure was substantially and significantly higher for part-timers than full-timers, in 2006 and 2012 (Table 3), signalling persistently lower quality part-time jobs for men. Moreover, the aggregate part-time/full-time gap widened after the recession (because the part-time ‘bad’ score grew from 4.0 to 4.6). Part-timers in lower occupational classes were the most disadvantaged men by far (a bad score of 5.2) and they retained their ‘lead’ in weak job quality into the post-recessionary period.

INSERT TABLE 3 AROUND HERE

Multiple linear regressions⁴ were modelled in which ‘bad job quality’ was the dependent variable and work-time (full- or part-time) and occupational class were independent variables, with a range of controls added (age, marital status, parenthood status, job sector). The regression results confirm the descriptive findings: that hours of work and occupational class are both firmly linked to job quality. Negative coefficients affirm that part-timers’ jobs contrast poorly with those of full-timers, and that ATP, and SOE jobs even

more so, are lower quality than MPA (Table 4).

INSERT TABLE 4 AROUND HERE

Male part-timers and job satisfaction

The next question addresses men's evaluations of these jobs. The inclusive measurement of 'satisfied' ensures that most men are job-satisfied, but a striking finding is that the six years spanning 2006-12 saw an abrupt turnaround in male part-timers' overall assessments of their jobs compared to full-timers. In 2006, there had been no part-time/full-time gap in job satisfaction: the vast majority (86/85%) of men reported being job-satisfied (Figure 4a). By 2012, a statistically significant job-satisfaction gap had arisen, to the disadvantage of male part-timers, a result of levels dropping sharply for part-timers (68% reported job satisfaction) while full-timers' evaluations remained more stable (82%, Figure 4b).

INSERT FIGURE 4 AROUND HERE

Figure 4c again provides a visual summary of change. In a time of economic unrest, levels of satisfaction fell on almost all of the component job dimensions, for part- and full-timers both, but by far the greatest drops overall were for men in part-time jobs. Indeed, in 11 out of the 15 dimensions of satisfaction that the survey studied, male part-timers fared worse over time than full-timers. Levels of satisfaction were also examined over time by occupational class. For reasons of space, only satisfaction with the job overall is presented in Figure 5. Amid relative stability for full-timers, overall job satisfaction fell substantially for part-timers as a group, as we saw, but this aggregate part-time decline was powered by the men in ATP (-33%) and SOE (-

21%) occupations. The MPA part-timers fared well in both 2006 and 2012 (+2% change).

INSERT FIGURE 5 AROUND HERE

Are male part-timers ungrateful slaves?: bringing together job quality and job satisfaction

The article asks whether decreasingly satisfied male part-time workers in the UK might be termed 'ungrateful slaves'. To answer this question, we must juxtapose job satisfaction (grateful or not?) with job quality (are men in 'slave' jobs?). Slave jobs, or 'bad' quality jobs, are operationalised as having five or more bad dimensions (out of the potential 12).

As Figure 6a shows, the largest single groups of male employees in 2006, among full- and part-timers, were in the least disadvantaged category: they were not working in a 'bad' job and they were job-satisfied ('grateful non-slaves', in effect). Nevertheless, a clear part-time/full-time gap existed with fewer part-timers there (52% versus 68%) and a real drop (to 40%) by 2012. A third (34%) of part-timers had been 'grateful slaves' in 2006: in a 'bad' job yet satisfied with it. This figure fell to 27% in 2012, a reduction powered by the SOE part-timers (61% to 39%). At the same time, 2006-2012 saw more than a doubling of 'ungrateful slaves' (9% to 21%): part-timers who were not satisfied with their bad jobs. These developments were powered by the changes in job quality and job satisfaction among SOE part-time workers, and ATP behind them, but with MPAs barely affected. These results suggest a 'race to the bottom' with fewer of the men in mid-level part-time jobs satisfied with them, moving closer to the (weakening) satisfaction levels of men in lower level part-time jobs. It is likely that pre-recession these jobs were seen as a stop-gap measure to a full-time job and were perceived more positively as a result. After an extended period of economic turmoil and persistent austerity (with

rising costs and stagnating wages, etc.), satisfaction with the quality of part-time jobs dropped substantially for all but the small group of high level workers.

INSERT FIGURE 6 AROUND HERE

Discussion

This article helps to fill two sizeable gaps in knowledge concerning male part-timers. Are men's part-time jobs of lower quality than full-time jobs? Are male part-timers job-satisfied compared to their full-time peers? A fundamental part of both interrogations is whether men's part-time employment varies by occupational class. The research shows, first, that men's part-time jobs are of lower quality than full-time jobs, including but not only in terms of what they pay. Second, male part-timers are satisfied with their jobs overall, as are full-timers but, unlike full-timers, their levels of job satisfaction fell substantially by 2012, as did satisfaction with many aspects of the job, including the hours worked, the amount of work, the pay, and so on. Men in SOE part-time jobs experienced the most deeply problematic labour market positions.

Our attention to men's part-time jobs is inspired by, and builds upon, a long legacy of influential research into part-time employment, dominated by the experiences of women workers. We drew directly on the 'grateful slave' debate in sociology because it juxtaposed job quality with job satisfaction, with occupational class known to constrain women's entry to part-time employment and shape evaluations of their jobs. This article applied that juxtaposition to men and showed, amid an overall drop in part-time job quality, falling numbers of male part-timers as 'grateful slaves' if that is defined, according to Hakim 1991,

as being satisfied with a very weak job. It appears that men are not voluntarily embracing more precarious working arrangements and do not express satisfaction with low quality jobs in spite of a tight labour market. However, although we affirm that it is indeed valuable to bring job satisfaction together with an analysis of job quality in order to explore the experiences of part-timers, to end the article we step back to reflect on the value of the 'grateful slave' metaphor and its appropriateness for the ongoing analysis of part-time jobs in the UK.

The grateful slave part-timer: revisiting and evaluating the metaphor

At the time of writing, there are 575 citations of the 1991 grateful slave article on Google scholar and it is still being quoted regularly. The article and citing publications engage with many themes core to the study of women's work, but especially questions of choice and preferences in their working lives. What is glaringly absent, from the 1991 article itself and the large body of work that draws upon it, is any serious or sustained critical engagement with the metaphor itself.

'Grateful slave' is an inflammatory concept, with a history steeped in racial slavery, and so it is odd that Hakim herself did not explain or defend why it was used. Indeed, the grateful slave words are barely mentioned in the 1991 article. They appear, in passing, when Hakim cites previous studies that show high job satisfaction reported by homeworkers with their poorly paid and low skilled work: 'homeworkers are themselves conscious of the contradiction in their attitudes and that they are, *in a sense, grateful slaves*. Depth interviews and case studies show that homeworkers are conscious that their work *can be regarded as slave labour*' (Hakim 1991: 103, italics added).

The bulk of usage of the 1991 article similarly barely addresses the concept. If it is directly mentioned, it is employed in Hakim's terms, that is with the authors explaining what Hakim meant by it. Ginn et al (1996: 171), for example, say Hakim used the metaphor to blame the victim: 'Hakim tends to place unwarranted emphasis on women's attitudes and orientation to work, blaming the victim, as indicated by the epithet 'Grateful Slaves'' (for other recaps on Hakim's usage of grateful slave see e.g. Fagan and Rubery 1996; Pathak 2015; Scheibl 1998). Other authors go on to explore whether findings from their own research projects support or refute the grateful slave paradox. Crompton and Harris (1998: 122) explained that their study of highly qualified women meant that 'we are not in a position to present any new evidence relating to women in lower level jobs (Hakim's 'grateful slaves')' while Walters (2005) examined whether the working class female part-time workers she interviewed fit the grateful slave model or not (and see Dean 2012). Many writers do stress that the term is 'controversial', and many conclude that it does not do justice to the realities of women's lives (Devine 1994; Duberley et al. 2014; Proctor and Padfield 1999). James (2008) remarks that the term is 'condescending' to women. Finally, notably, Desperak (2015) observes (albeit briefly) its problematic reliance on a racist idea.

The absence of any deeper engagement with the metaphor of a grateful slave, in Hakim's own article and elsewhere, is remarkable. The allegories we use have powerful repercussions: they name and frame social problems and can signal and entrench biases. Philosopher Schön's (1993) influential interrogation of the role of metaphors in social policy stresses the power of a metaphor left 'tacit'. Metaphors shape the ways that social problems are set: the stories that metaphors 'tell about troublesome situations' (1993: 138)

then shape how problems are solved. For Schön, a 'tacit' metaphor needs to be 'spelled out' in order to 'elaborate the assumptions which flow from it, and examine its appropriateness in the present situation'. So we now take some time to 'spell out' the grateful slave metaphor and conclude on its appropriateness in the present study of part-time employment.

Beginning with 'slave', we can suppose it was used specifically both to signal low job quality and to critique feminist sociology for its purported over-emphasis on a lack of free choice characterising women's working lives (that evaluation was elaborated further in e.g. Hakim 1995). The 'free choice' part of the grateful slave narrative centres on the reasons why women enter into weak part-time employment (Halrynjo and Lyng 2009). Hakim sees free rather than constrained choice here and this conviction would become even more central in the later 'preference theory'. In focusing upon male workers' evaluations of their poor quality jobs in this article, we have not engaged in depth with the 'choice' part of the grateful slave metaphor. We do not have data on why men in the SES are working part-time but we saw, in the LFS, an upsurge in men reporting that they took part-time jobs due to a lack of full-time opportunities. Those men are clearly not exercising free choice over their work-lifestyles, with men in lower level occupations most constrained to work part-time involuntarily. However, we cannot emphasise strongly enough that workers facing a constrained choice to enter low quality part-time jobs in the formal labour market cannot and should not be deemed as tantamount to slaves. There are important theoretically-rich and complex debates around slavery that engage with such issues as the simplistic and problematic dichotomising of 'free' versus 'forced' labour, and that discuss how slave work can involve the threat and reality of everyday intimidation, violence and tyranny (e.g. O'Connell Davidson 2015). Given its complexity,

O'Connell Davidson has rightly warned about 'careless talk' around the use of the 'slavery' concept and argued against deploying this loaded term loosely and uncritically. We also caution against 'careless talk' and reject slavery as an appropriate framework for future studies of part-time employment in the formal labour market.

We similarly question the legitimacy of a narrative in which workers who express job satisfaction in the contemporary labour market are framed, uncritically, in terms of their 'gratitude' for having a job. As with 'slave', the case for using 'grateful' is not made in the 1991 article but, again, this is a complex concept that deserves to be unpacked, or spelled out, if sociology is to employ it and/or refer to it. Gratitude as a concept is studied far more extensively in psychology than it is in sociology (though see Simmel 1908/1959), with research themes including the patterns of in/equality in relationships that expect or lead to feelings and expressions of gratitude. Considering the meaning of gratitude in the context of our case-study of workers in part-time jobs in the UK we had real misgivings about proceeding further and uncritically with the 'grateful' dimension of the 1991 metaphor too. White (1999), for example, suggested that gratitude can be seen as a response 'by which the beneficiary honours and celebrates the benefactor's goodwill'. Luccarelli (2019) identifies a 'gratitude of duty' in which 'something special' is given by someone 'with power' to someone without, and the powerless beneficiary must reciprocate by expressing gratitude or else be seen as an 'ingrate'. A benevolent employer offering work as an act of goodwill, and demanding gratitude in return, is a highly dubious framework for analysing the contemporary part-time labour market. These notions of honour, gifting and beneficiaries that lie at the heart of the gratitude concept have been left unspecified, untheorized and unchallenged, in both the 1991 formulation of 'grateful' slaves and responses to it.

Finally, we reject any use of the full 'grateful slave' metaphor that leaves tacit the racialised history of the term. Boulukos (2008) analyses how the construct developed and functioned in UK and USA culture. He shows that the grateful slave notion was used to portray slavery positively because black slaves, as 'Uncle Tom' or 'Mammy' figures, were depicted as devoted to their masters in gratitude for benevolent treatment. To our knowledge, our article is the first to reflect on the atheoretical deployment of a 'grateful slave' metaphor. Having 'spelled it out', we do not recommend gratitude and slavery as appropriate conceptual frameworks for future research into part-time employment in the UK.

In spite of the many negative implications of using the grateful slave metaphor, it did usefully highlight the value of including job satisfaction when studying job quality and women's work-time, leading to an influential debate over how best to understand workers' positive evaluations of those jobs that have very problematic dimensions. This is certainly more nuanced than an approach common in the study of male part-timers whereby men working part-time are grouped into two: those doing so voluntarily and those who would prefer full-time hours. It is vital to move beyond this over-simplistic dichotomy to understand male part-time employment more holistically, and we should certainly take inspiration from the larger and more established study of female part-time employment in order to do so. As discussed earlier, for example, the notion of 'satisficing' has been deployed to explain why many women working part-time in objectively low quality jobs nevertheless express satisfaction with those jobs. In our analysis of male part-timers, many of the men were dissatisfied with their weak jobs but satisfaction levels may well rise over time if, trapped in poor quality part-time jobs, the men begin to 'make the best' of bad jobs

as many women have done, perhaps comparing their employment positions more favourably to the heightened numbers of men around them who are employed precariously or are unemployed.

Conclusion

The analysis of male part-time workers in this article adds much needed insight into a growing section of the part-time labour force in a tightening labour market and it simultaneously updates understanding of part-time employment more broadly. Our findings testify to the persistent, deeply problematic nature of part-time jobs post-recession. We return to the idea of a 'grateful slave' to bring together job quality with job satisfaction in the analysis of male part-timers but, after 'unpacking' this highly cited metaphor, we reject its value for the further analysis of part-time jobs.

The level of male part-time employment continued to grow in the UK after 2012, while involuntary part-time working declined after 2013, though remaining higher than the pre-2008 figure and especially for men in Sales and Customer Service, Process, Plant and Machine Operatives, and Elementary occupations. More research is needed into trends in job quality and in job satisfaction among part-time working men, that also incorporates occupational class. Unfortunately, the small number, and reducing percentages, of male part-timers in higher-level occupations shown here suggests that only a minority in senior roles choose to reduce their hours voluntarily. The percentage of male part-timers satisfied to be working in bad jobs declined over time and, in the context of a persistently insecure labour market, this portrayal of male part-timers is likely to continue.

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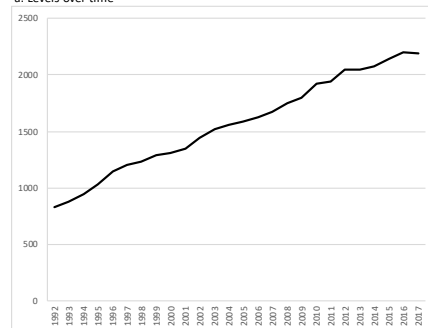
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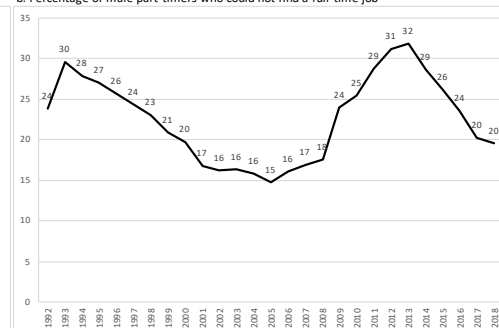
TABLES AND FIGURES TO BE INSERTED (the originals are in Excel)

Figure 1. Trends in male part-time working.

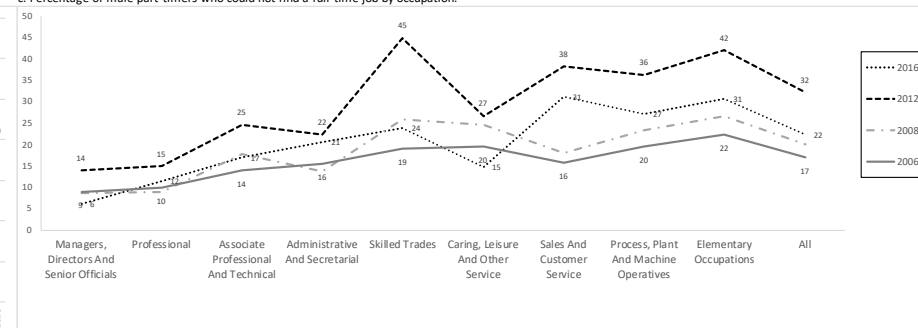
a. Levels over time



b. Percentage of male part-timers who could not find a full-time job



c. Percentage of male part-timers who could not find a full-time job by occupation.



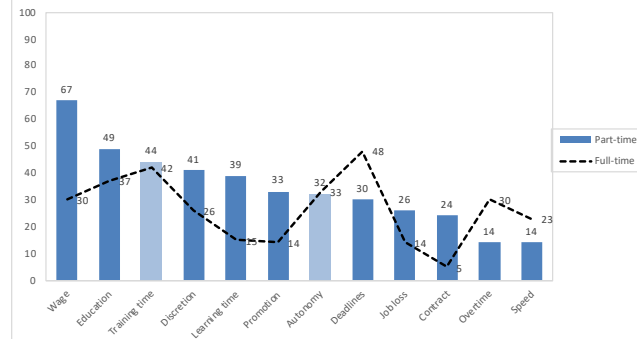
Sources: authors' analysis of the LFS via ONS Series ID: YCCV, YCDB.

Table 1. Dimensions of job quality.

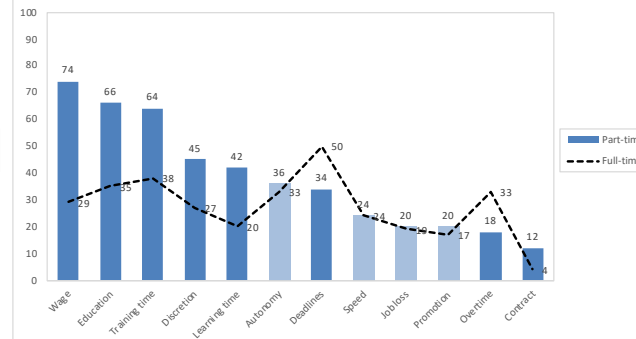
	SES variables	Details	'Bad' category
Pay	1. Wages	Hourly gross wage (£s).	Lowest paid third of men
Skill, Training, Discretion	2. Education mismatch	Education level held compared with level required to get the job (ISCED levels 0-4).	Education level held > Education level required to get the job
	3. Learning	'How long did it take for you, after you first started doing this type of job, to learn to do it well?' (6 responses ranging from '<1 month' to 'over 2 years').	Less than a month (the lowermost category available)
	4. Training	'Since completing full-time education, have you ever had, or are you currently undertaking, training for the type of work that you currently do? How long, in total, did/will that training last?' (6 responses from 'No training for the job' to 'Over 2 years').	No training (the lowermost category available)
	5. Discretion	SES scale merging how much influence you personally have on: How hard you work? Deciding what tasks you are to do? Deciding how you are to do the task? Deciding the quality standards to which you work? (each scored 0-3. 3 highest discretion). Scale 0-12.	Scores <2
Turnover	6. Job contract	'Permanent', 'Seasonal', 'Fixed', 'Agency temp', 'Casual'.	Not permanent (seasonal, fixed, agency temp, casual)
	7. Job loss	'Any chance of job loss in next 12 months?' ('No', 'Yes likely', 'Yes evens', 'Yes unlikely').	Yes likely/Yes evens
Promotion ladders	8. Promotion	'Any chance of promotion in current organization?' ('Definite', 'High', '50/50', 'Low', 'No chance').	No chance (and not at top of organization already)
Work-time	9. Autonomy	'I can decide the time I start and finish work' (4 responses ranging from 'Strongly agree' to 'Strongly disagree').	Strongly disagree
	10. Speed	'How often does your work involve working at very high speed?' (7 responses ranging from 'All the time' to 'Never').	All the time/almost all
	11. Deadlines	'How often does your work involve working to tight deadlines?' (7 responses ranging from 'All the time' to 'Never').	All the time/almost all
	12. Over-time	'I often have to work extra time, over and above the formal hours of my job, to get through the work or to help out' ('Very true', 'True', 'Somewhat', 'Not at all').	Very true

Figure 2. The percentage of men with a 'bad' dimension to their job by work-time (employees aged 20-65).

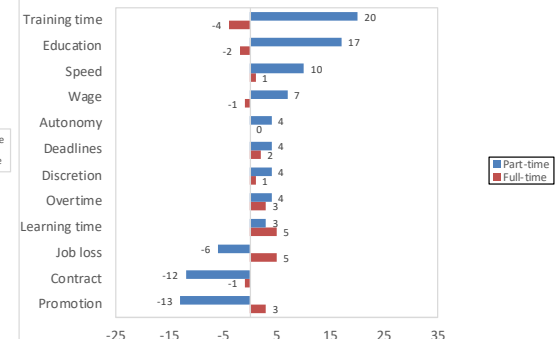
a. 2006



b. 2012



c. Change between 2006 and 2012¹.



Source: authors' analysis of the SES.

Notes: The light coloured columns in Figures (a)(b) signal that the part-time/full-time gaps are not statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

¹ Positive scores in Figure (c) indicate MORE men have bad dimensions by 2012.

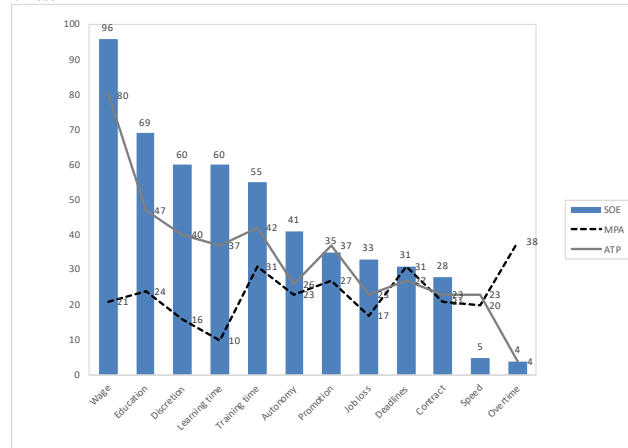
Table 2. Men's occupations by work-time (employees aged 20-65).

	Employees			
	2006		2012	
	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time
<i>Occupational group</i>	col %			
Managers, Prof, Assoc prof/Technical	33	48	22	52
Admin, Trades, Personal	22	25	21	24
Sales, Operatives, Elementary	45	27	58	24
N (weighted)	216	2,836	116	1,279

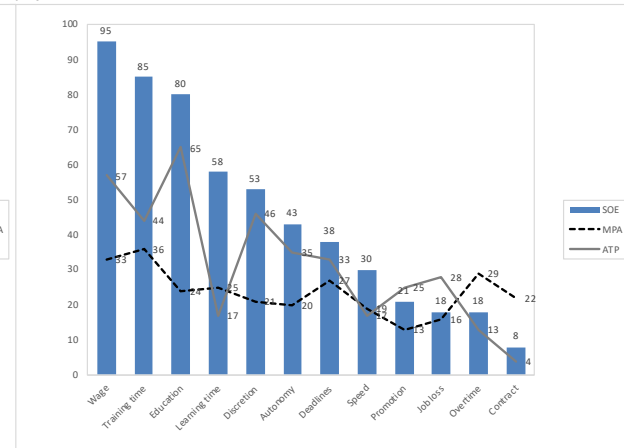
Sources: authors' analysis of the SES.

Figure 3. The percentage of male part-timers with a 'bad' dimension to their job by occupational class (employees aged 20-65).

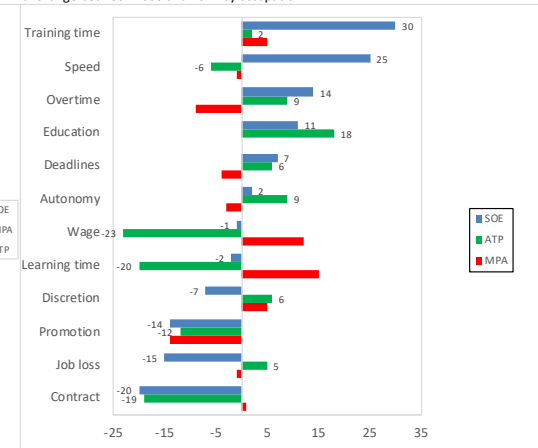
a. 2006



b. 2012



c. Change between 2006 and 2012 by occupation¹



Source: authors' analysis of the SES.

¹ Positive scores in Figure (c) indicate MORE men have bad dimensions by 2012.

SOE= Sales, Operatives, Elementary; ATP=Admin, Trades, Personal; MPA=Managers, Prof, Assoc prof/Technical occupations.

Table 3. Mean score on 'bad job quality' measure (employees aged 20-65).

	2006		2012	
	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time
All ¹	4.0	3.2	4.6	3.2
Managers, Prof, Assoc prof/Technical	2.6	2.4	2.9	2.6
Admin, Trades, Personal	3.5	3.2	4.1	3.2
Sales, Operatives, Elementary	5.2	4.4	5.2	4.7
N (weighted).	216	2,836	116	1,279

Sources: authors' analysis of the SES.

¹ Part-time/full-time gap statistically significant at $p < 0.01$

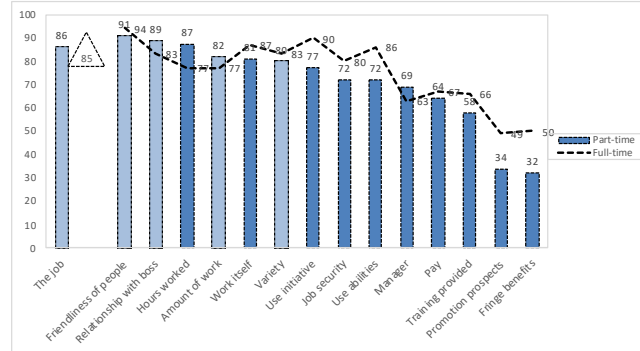
Table 4. OLS regression of 'bad' job quality (male employees aged 20-65).

	2006	2012
	Beta	Beta
Part-time (<i>reference: Full-time</i>)	-0.06***	-0.08***
<i>Occupation (reference: Higher MPA)</i>		
Middle (ATP)	-0.27***	-0.31***
Lower (SOE)	-0.51***	-0.53***
Age	-0.07***	-0.13***
Marital status: Single (<i>reference: has a partner</i>)	-0.08***	0.02
No child aged < 16 (<i>reference: has young children</i>)	-0.00	-0.09***
Private sector worker (<i>reference: Public sector</i>)	-0.03*	-0.02
Adjusted R Square	0.22	0.26
N	2,484	1,016

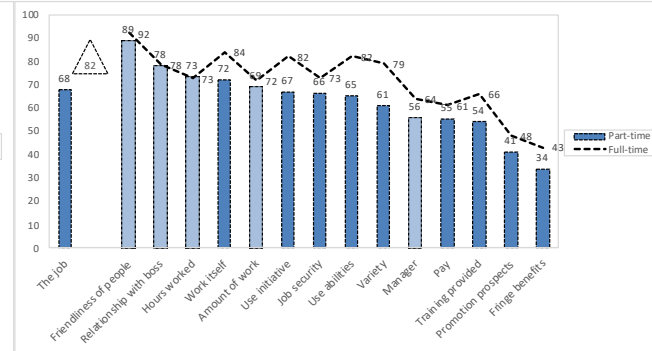
Notes: *** p < 0.001 ** p < 0.01

Source: authors' analysis of the SES.

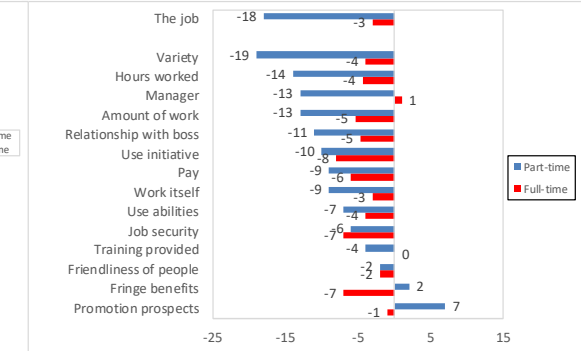
Figure 4. Levels of men's job satisfaction by work-time (employees aged 20-65).
a. 2006



b. 2012



c. Change in levels of satisfaction, 2006-2012.

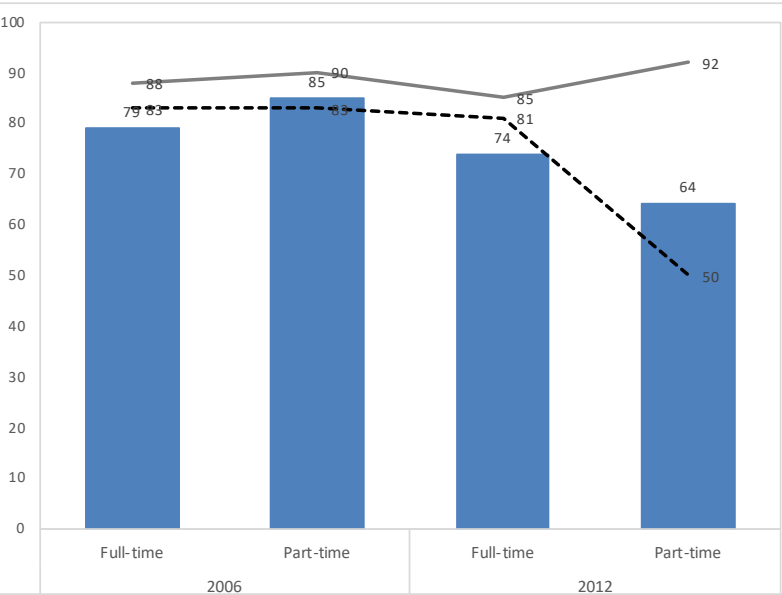


Source: authors' analysis of the SES.

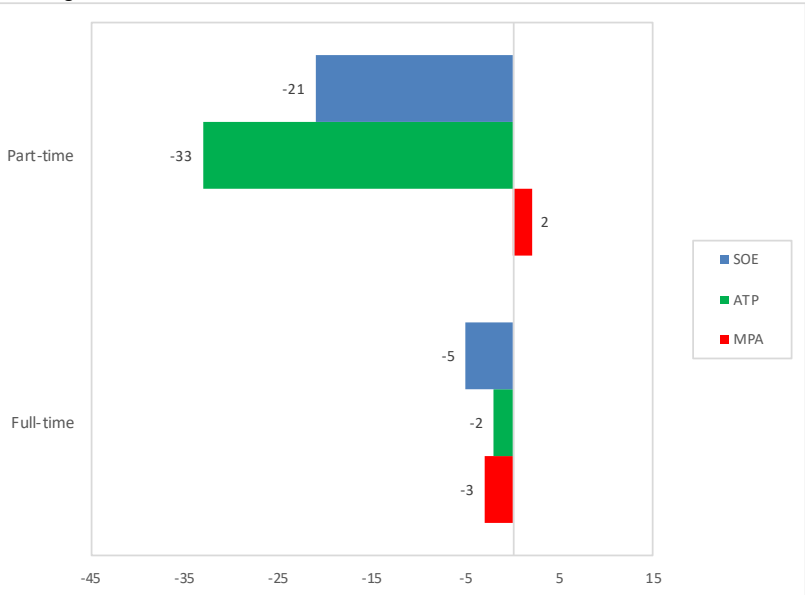
Notes: The light coloured columns in Figures (a)(b) signal that the part-time/full-time gaps are not statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

Figure 5. Levels of men's job satisfaction by occupational class (employees aged 20-65).

a. 2006 and 2012



b. Change between 2006 and 2012

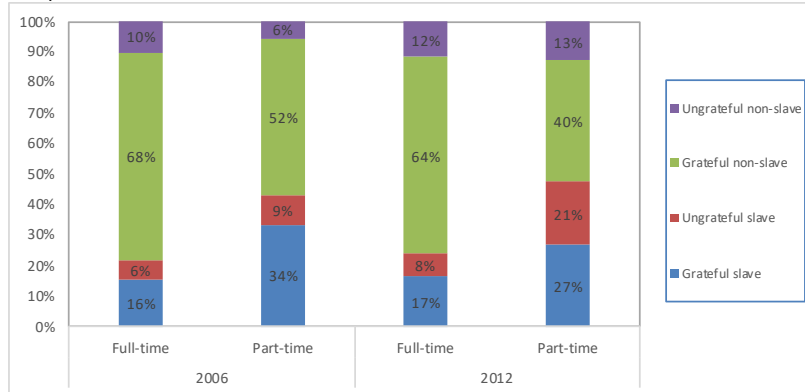


Source: authors' analysis of the SES.

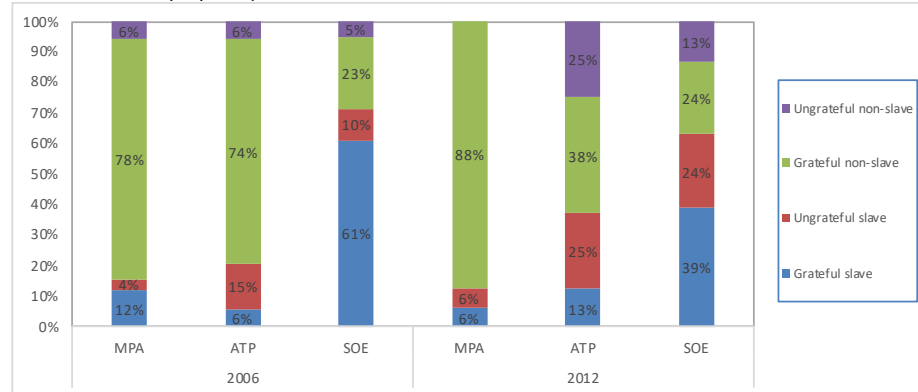
SOE= Sales, Operatives, Elementary; ATP=Admin, Trades, Personal; MPA=Managers, Prof, Assoc prof/Technical occupations.

Figure 6. Ungrateful slaves? Job quality and job satisfaction (male employees aged 20-65).

a. By work-time



b. Part-timers only, by occupational class



Sources: authors' analysis of the SES.

SOE= Sales, Operatives, Elementary; ATP=Admin, Trades, Personal; MPA=Managers, Prof, Assoc prof/Technical occupations.

Notes

1 All data analysed are weighted.

2 This decision was shaped by sample size considerations. Where possible, a preferred target was set between a quarter and a third of workers having the 'bad' category on each variable.

3 Each variable is weighted equally. Alternative approaches were explored (e.g. each of the five dimensions contributing one fifth to the summative variable) but overall conclusions were comparable.

4 We trialled a variety of regression models (including logistic regression for a dichotomised version of 'bad' versus 'not bad' job quality). They produced similar overall results, hence only reproduce the OLS here (like McGovern et al. 2004).